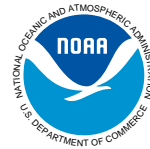


NOAA'S FISHERIES SERVICE



NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

NOAA's Fisheries Service is the federal agency responsible for the stewardship of the nation's living marine resources and their habitats. We manage, conserve and protect fish, shellfish, whales, dolphins, sea turtles and other living creatures in the oceans.

As a world class science agency that serves the entire country, it is our mission to ensure healthy fisheries for the benefit of all Americans. Federally managed living marine resources provide an important source of food and recreation for the nation, as well as thousands of jobs and a traditional way of life for many coastal communities.

NOAA's Fisheries Service works to promote sustainable fisheries and to prevent the lost potential associated with overfishing, diminished resources and degraded habitats. We strive to balance competing public needs and interests in the use and enjoyment of our ocean and coastal resources. We carry out our stewardship responsibilities through scientific research and policy development, all of which guides our programs, including sustainable fisheries, protected species, seafood safety inspection, aquaculture, enforcement and habitat conservation.

There are a lot of exciting things going on at NOAA's Fisheries Service. We are working hard to end overfishing by the year 2010, and we are partnering with Congress to get legislation approved to begin open sea aquaculture in federal waters. NOAA recently kicked off a Web site called "FishWatch" that provides information for consumers about what seafood is safe to eat, and the agency is doing more podcasting, blogging and creating more interactive Web sites with links to whale sounds and new quieter ship sounds. We have some of the world's leading experts working on how sounds in the ocean affect marine mammals, and using new innovative ways to study and save species that are in trouble.

Technology is important for NOAA's Fisheries Service, and some of the tools we use include boats, airplanes and research vessels. NOAA's Fisheries Service recently commissioned two new acoustically quiet research vessels, the *Oscar Dyson* in Alaska and the *Bigelow* in New England, which are setting the standard for lowering noise in the oceans. Builders are currently building two more fisheries survey vessels to replace our aging fleet, including the *Pisces*, which is expected to be commissioned in 2009.

Using the tools provided by the Magnuson Stevens Act (reauthorized in 2006), NOAA's Fisheries Service assesses and predicts the status of fish stocks, ensures compliance with fisheries regulations, and works to reduce wasteful fishing practices. We help ensure healthy fisheries by protecting essential fish habitat and restoring degraded habitat. We also partner with communities around the country to practice ecosystem-based solutions. Our scientists believe that all living things are linked, and that it's critical that everything from corals to whales are healthy and sustainable.

Healthy fisheries provide food, jobs, recreation and more for people around the world. For example, commercial fishers in the United States caught more than nine billion pounds of seafood, worth more than \$4 billion in 2007. In that year

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Fishing vessel returns to port in Maine.

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alone, U.S. consumers spent approximately \$68 billion for fishery products.

Coastal communities in the United States rely on the important social and economic contributions of marine sport fishing. In 2007, recreational fishers made more than 86 million marine fishing trips on the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coasts, catching almost 468 million fish and releasing 58 percent alive.

Under the guidance of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act, NOAA's Fisheries Service protects and rebuilds populations of protected marine species, such as sea turtles, whales and dolphins. We support the development of innovative management strategies and technologies to reduce potential conflicts involving protected species and to prevent species from becoming threatened or endangered. We educate the public about the dangers of interacting with wild marine mammals, and we encourage responsible marine mammal viewing guidelines.

NOAA's Fisheries Service scientists are developing new ways to save sea turtles and the critically endangered right whale. We have some of the most talented experts in the world working on fish hook designs, net designs and marine mammal bycatch.

Healthy upland, coastal and ocean habitats are essential to ensure protection and recovery of NOAA's trust resources, marine mammals, fish and other living creatures. Through the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, the NOAA Open Rivers Initiative, and the NOAA Restoration Center, NOAA's Fisheries Service is helping to remove derelict dams, improve fish passage, and restore habitats that benefit anadromous fish and improve coastal economies. This restorative work will lead to healthy ecosystems, healthy fisheries and healthy coastal economies.

In addition, NOAA's Fisheries Service, in conjunction with NOAA's Office of Sustainable Development and Intergovernmental Affairs, works closely with economically distressed fishing communities and other agencies to design

comprehensive emergency economic assistance packages that aid displaced fishers and help restore depleted fishery resources. We assist fishers through government-guaranteed loans, technology transfer and economic incentives.

Because many of the marine resources that NOAA's Fisheries Service manages are shared with other nations, and involve the need for cooperative management on the high seas, we must engage internationally to advance U.S. objectives for the effective conservation and management of shared living marine resources. The Office of International Affairs works in close collaboration with other NOAA offices, other federal agencies, and with domestic and international partners to achieve its objectives. Specific areas of engagement include ecosystem-based fisheries management, controlling fishing capacity, combating illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, protecting endangered species, strengthening regional fishery management organizations, securing equitable access for the United States to shared resources and providing technical assistance to developing countries. Primary authorities of the Office of International Affairs include the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Endangered Species Act and various laws that implement U.S. treaty obligations.

NOAA's Fisheries Service is out in front on issues such as seafood safety and aquaculture. We believe that aquaculture is very important to our country's economy. As Americans continue to eat more seafood, scientists predict a major shortfall in supply in the next 25 years. New figures show that seafood consumption in the United States fell in 2007 from 16.5 pounds per person to 16.2 pounds per person. Our country currently imports 84 percent of the seafood we eat.

NOAA's Fisheries Service will continue to lead the charge for healthier, more robust populations of fish and shellfish. Our scientists will continue to develop new ways for our oceans' creatures to coexist with humans, so that future generations can enjoy the beauty and bounty that our oceans provide. 🐟



Waterfront at New Bedford, Mass.